

**Tahoe Sierra IRWMP Partnership
1275 Meadow Crest Dr.
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150**

June 9, 2011

California Department of Water Resources
Division of Integrated Regional Water Management
Financial Assistance Branch
PO BOX 942836
Sacramento, CA 94236-0001
Attn: Mr. Trevor Joseph

RE: Funding Request/Proposition 84 IRWM Implementation Funding

Dear Mr. Joseph:

In the recent funding decisions by Department of Water Resources (DWR) for the Round 1 Proposition 84 IRWM Implementation, the Tahoe Sierra IRWM partnership was not recommended for funding. Although the partnership responded to the application evaluation in a separate letter, we would like to bring DWR's attention to a suggestion for funding the most critical of the projects submitted in our Round 1 IRWM Implementation application by utilizing future Proposition 84 funding as allocated to our Lahontan region.

The Tahoe Sierra IRWM invested significant resources in the application process. As the Tahoe Sierra IRWM encompasses a large geographical area that includes several disadvantaged communities, the resources available for this process included only the staff time of member agencies and volunteers. Projects were evaluated, rated and ranked in a year-long process that led to the most critical projects being included in the Round 1 application. This rating and ranking process included points for being ready for implementation, as well as points for projects that are part of a larger initiative.

The recent denial of funding for this application has disheartened our partnership, especially those smaller non-profit agencies and volunteers who donated so much of their time and energy to meeting the requirements of IRWM plan development and adoption, as well as helping to prepare the sections of the application. The Tahoe Sierra IRWM has made much progress in the seven years since the original IRWM plan adoption, and we are proud to say that our progress has been accomplished by relying on the local resources of our partners. The partners have fully embraced the IRWM goal of cooperation and coordination and, in spite of difficult discussions and negotiations; all partners have remained active and engaged. The projects as proposed are needed now and cannot wait for future allocations. For this reason, we are proposing that DWR consider our request for funding \$3,518,014 from future Proposition 84 allocations for the Lahontan region in order to implement the following critical projects:

Tahoe Resource Conservation District Community Watershed Program (\$450,000)

The Community Watershed Partnership program provides technical assistance to property owners and land managers in the Tahoe Basin. The lack of continued funding for this program will result in a minimum of 2300 tons of fine sediment, 77 tons of total nitrogen and 23 tons of total phosphorus being transferred into Lake Tahoe (a 303d listed impaired waterbody) and the surrounding tributaries on an annual basis. In addition, technical assistance would not be able to be provided to property owners in relation to invasive weed control or fire defensible space practices, resulting in increased competition between invasive species and native vegetation as well as reduced ability to prevent catastrophic wildfire. With the recent adoption of Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) standards for the Tahoe Basin, it is imperative to compliment to efforts of local, state and federal agencies who are implementing environmental improvement projects with efforts that target the private sector for implementation of natural resource conservation practices on their individual properties.

Town of Truckee Truckee River Water Quality Monitoring (\$623,000)

The Town of Truckee is requesting funding to continue implementation of the Truckee River Water Quality Monitoring Plan (TRWQMP) developed in response to an order issued by the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board. It is critical that the Town secure funding to implement the TRWQMP to ensure regulatory compliance with NPDES permits, Middle Truckee River TMDL, Lahontan Board Orders, to develop scientifically defensible water quality monitoring datasets of surface water resources that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of Stormwater Management Programs and efforts, target appropriate user groups and provide information to make Land Use decisions. The Town is in the second year of monitoring the first phase of the monitoring program. The first phase was intended to be three years long and we are ready to continue the first phase and immediately add Phase 2 for implementation of the TRWQMP.

El Dorado County Montgomery Estates Erosion Control and Water Quality Improvement Project (\$500,000)

EDC believes it is critical that this project be funded through the Tahoe Sierra IRWMP for the following reasons: The Montgomery Estates Erosion Control Project will lead to very large pollutant load reductions and result in direct benefits to an impaired water body (Lake Tahoe) and to the local environment, including steps toward Tahoe TMDL compliance and achieving Lake Tahoe Clarity Standards (a 303d listed waterbody). This project has fully developed plans and specifications ready for construction in the 2012 season (The construction season in Tahoe is from May 1 – October 15th.) If this project opportunity is missed it will result in elevated levels of fine sediment and associated pollutants to continue to be discharged into local drainages resulting in continued contribution to the loss of Lake Tahoe's famed Clarity, loss of habitat, loss of fish spawning areas, potential health risks and missed opportunities through the leveraging of other federal funding and other match sources.

Sierra County Little Truckee River Bridge Replacement (\$239,655)

The Sierra County project integrates several projects into one, the project as a whole requires all components to move forward in unison in order to achieve the proposed cost savings of conducting the multiple environmental surveys in a coordinated manner. This creates significant savings that will be lost if the projects are not able to progress in unison. The Little Truckee River Bridge replacement has been allocated and programmed at the Federal level and is under use it or lose conditions. The gauging station needs to be in place prior to this construction of that bridge in order to get base line measurement needed to determine the benefits of the whole project. If the funding for this project is not provided now the project will be lost due to the inability to stall the other associated work that is currently underway. The entire population of Sierra County is considered a disadvantaged community. Project implementation will benefit this population.

Truckee River Watershed Council Negro Canyon Restoration (\$544,355)

The Negro Canyon Restoration Project will improve water quality and riparian habitat through reducing erosion in a severely degraded sub-basin of the Truckee River. Negro Canyon has been severely impacted from past land uses, particularly the establishment of a road network that interrupts drainage patterns throughout the watershed. Each year that implementation is delayed leads to greater degradation in Negro Canyon and increases construction costs for the restoration work. Large snow years such as the past winter (2010-2011) exacerbate the problem – more runoff leads to more erosion, causing habitat loss and water quality impacts.

Placer County Griff Creek SEZ Improvement (\$600,000)

The Griff Creek SEZ Restoration Project is part of a larger phased, overall watershed approach to improving water quality, stormwater and stream zones in Kings Beach. The US Census Bureau Median Household income in 2007 for Kings Beach, California was \$42,629. This is less than 80% of the Median Household Income for Placer County baseline amount (as well as below the 2007 California State Median Household Income); therefore, Kings Beach is considered a Disadvantaged Community. The unemployment rate in Kings Beach is 10.3%, with negative job growth. Kings Beach jobs have decreased an additional 4% this year (Sperlings.com). Blighted low-income residential rental housing is adjacent to the project area. These neighborhood residents are disproportionately impacted by the environmental problems at the Project Site. Kings Beach would be served by implementation of the Griff Creek restoration project by directly improving and eliminating environmental impacts in the targeted community neighborhood. Construction of the project will likely employ local residents. Improved Lake Tahoe water quality, removal of environmental blight, and improved recreation components will support financial solubility of tourism in the targeted community. Not awarding the Tahoe Sierra IRWMP will result in critically impacting the Kings Beach community. A lack of funding will delay or stop the Griff Creek SEZ Restoration project.

Tahoe Sierra IRWM Water Agencies Regional Water Conservation Program (\$551,004)

Urban water suppliers within the Tahoe Sierra IRWM region, including South Tahoe Public Utility District (STPUD), Truckee Donner Public Utility District (TDPUD), Tahoe City Public Utility District (TCPUD), and North Tahoe Public Utility District (NTPUD), plan on implementing a regional approach to water conservation practices. This regional approach is in direct correlation with the objectives of the IRWM program to increase efficiency and reduce costs associated with implementation of environmental improvement projects. Currently, each agency has individual approaches to water conservation, but the agencies can save money and reach more water consumers by utilizing several regional approaches to include: ordering water saving appliances and fixtures in bulk; utilizing a single website to advertise programs; utilizing agency water specialists to train each other on implementing new programs within the region, and unifying efforts within the region. As DWR is aware, water conservation mandates make implementing these best management measures critical in order to reach the 20% reduction of water usage by the year 2020.

We have invited responses to this request from the IRWM partnerships in the Lahontan Region: Inyo-Mono, Mojave and Antelope Valley. Inyo-Mono has responded in support of this request. As we receive comments from the other groups, we will forward them on to your attention.

Thank you for the opportunity to request that DWR consider funding these projects as proposed.

Sincerely,

Representatives, Tahoe Sierra IRWM